



Policy and Code of Conduct for the acceptable use of Class/Year WhatsApp Groups

Class/Year WhatsApp Groups

Class/Year WhatsApp groups are a very useful and efficient way of communicating to the whole class. The aim of using WhatsApp is to send messages to an entire group, which are relevant to school.

The messages in the class/year WhatsApp groups come from parents/carers in their personal capacity. The school does not post directly on any WhatsApp parent/carer groups.

At St Eanswythe's, we believe it's important to:

- Work in partnership with parents to support their child's learning;
- Create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for pupils, staff and parents;
- Model appropriate behaviour for our pupils at all times.

To help us do this, we set clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all members of our community. This includes staff (through the staff code of conduct) and pupils (through our behaviour policy).

This code of conduct aims to help the school work together with parents by setting guidelines on appropriate behaviour.

Code of Conduct

Parents should adhere to the following guidelines when using class WhatsApp groups:

- The group should never be used as a platform to air views/grievances regarding a teacher, child or parent in the class or school;
- The group is not a political platform for airing opinions on current affairs;
- The group should not be used for private conversations with anyone else using the group;
- The group should be used keeping in mind mutual respect and cultural sensitivity between all its members.

We expect parents, carers and other visitors to:

- Respect the ethos, vision and values of our school;
- Work together with staff in the best interests of our pupils;
- Treat all members of the school community with respect – setting a good example with speech and behaviour;
- Seek a peaceful solution to all issues;
- Correct their own child's behaviour (or those in their care), particularly in public, where it could lead to conflict, aggression or unsafe conduct;
- Approach the right member of school staff to help resolve any issues of concern.

Please note, the school considers the following online activity inappropriate:

- Abusive or personal comments about staff, pupils or other parents or any member of the school community;
- Displays of anger including swearing, or using offensive language;
- Bringing the school into disrepute;
- Posting aggressive, defamatory or libellous comments;
- Emails circulated or sent directly with abusive or personal comments about staff, pupils or any member of the school community;

- Using social media to publicly challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children;
- Threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating staff, or using bad language.

The school takes safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will deal with any reported incidents appropriately.

Raising Concerns

If you are concerned about inappropriate comments on a class/year WhatsApp group, in confidence, please contact our Senior Leadership Team by emailing the school on admin@st-eanswythes.kent.sch.uk

If the school suspects, or becomes aware, that a parent has breached the code of conduct detailed above, the school will gather information from those involved and speak to the parent about the incident.

Depending on the nature of the incident, the school may then:

- Send a warning letter to the parent;
- Invite the parent into school to meet with a senior member of staff or the Head Teacher;
- Contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour);
- Seek advice from our legal team/the local authority's legal team regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous);
- Ban the parent from the school site.

The school will always respond to an incident in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to breaches of the code of conduct rests with the Head Teacher.

If a parent/carer's behaviour on a WhatsApp group breaches this policy and code of conduct, it is the prerogative of that group's moderator/s to remove the parent from the group.